

**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE DISTRICT OF SOUTH CAROLINA
CHARLESTON DIVISION**

Tonja Johnson,

Plaintiff,

v.

Georgetown County School District,
Georgetown County, South Carolina

Defendant.

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Case No. 2:23-CV-1695-BHH-KDW

COMPLAINT
(Jury Trial Requested)

The Plaintiff complaining of the Defendant alleges:

INTRODUCTION

1. This is an action brought for racial discrimination in employment and related claims under the authority of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 42 U.S.C. §§2000(e) et seq (Title VII); 42 U.S.C. §1981; The Fourteenth Amendment of the Constitution of the United States; and all applicable Laws of South Carolina under the authority of 28 U.S.C. §1367 (a) to include but not limited to §1-13-10, et seq. of the Code of Laws of South Carolina; and all other federal and state laws protecting people against racial discrimination in the workplace. The Plaintiff is a resident of Georgetown County, South Carolina which is a part of the Charleston Division of the United District Court; and the Defendant is an institution that is responsible for the operation of the public schools operating in Georgetown County, and it is a political subdivision of the State of South Carolina operating in Georgetown County.

2. The Plaintiff has filed a complaint with the Federal Equal Employment Opportunity Commission which has investigated her complaints and has given her the right to bring this action.

3. Under the circumstances described herein, including the connection of both parties to Georgetown County, the claims alleged, particularly claims brought under Title VII of the United States Code based upon racial discrimination, and applicable South Carolina law, and the jurisdictional amount required by law, having been met this Court's jurisdiction of this matter is proper, and the claims made herein should be adjudicated by this Court in this judicial district and division.

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

4. The Georgetown County School District is now and has been for many years, since 1997, operating under an Order of this Court most recently dated August 28, 1997 and still in full force and effect prohibiting racial discrimination in hiring administrative personnel to work within the Defendant School District.

5. The Plaintiff, a black female, has been an employee of the Georgetown County School District since August 1997. In 2019, she was appointed as a principal assigned to the Maryville Elementary School where she served until May 4, 2022.

6. The Plaintiff was notified of her removal from her position as the Principal of Maryville Elementary School on May 4, 2022, and she was then demoted from her position as a Principal in the school district, and then reassigned as an Assistant Principal at Andrews Elementary School located in Andrews, South Carolina.

7. Soon after her arrival at the Maryville Elementary School where she undertook her assigned duties as the Principal of the school, she encountered unfounded racially oriented and unjustified, resistance to her management to the performance and leadership in her assigned job; and it was clearly established that all of such wrongful behavior that began to negatively affect her own work performance came from white administrative employees and teachers to the point that

the Plaintiff found it necessary to file a grievance with the School District management asking that the behavior of the white administrative employees at the school be addressed and corrected to allow the school to be properly administered as soon as possible. Her grievance was rejected without any consideration of the issues she attempted to raise and get resolved.

8. A group of many white teachers at Maryville Elementary took it upon themselves to write a letter to the Georgetown County School authorities that was quite obviously racially oriented containing complaints about the Plaintiff's administrative performance with the intention of having her discharged from her employment at the school, a unlawful and discrimination goal in which they succeeded.

9. There is no doubt that the large group of white teachers and administrators have conspired with the School District Administration to unlawfully remove the Plaintiff as Principal of the school, another effort in which they were successful.

10. There is little doubt that the white staff and the teachers at the school by their behavior and motivations resulted in the Plaintiff being removed from her position at the Maryville Elementary School, demoted, and moved to another school in Andrews, South Carolina to serve as an Assistant Principal for less pay than before.

11. The reasons given by the School Administration for her dismissal and demotion were nothing more than a discriminatory pretext for their actions when the evidence, direct and circumstantial, established that intentional racial and gender discrimination was at the core reasons for Plaintiffs dismissal.

12. In addition to the racial discrimination against Plaintiff, the evidence establishes that gender discrimination, that is the Defendants planning the appointment and permanent employment of men over women in administrative positions is also another violation of Title VII

of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 in addition to the racial discrimination behavior of the school administration that was obvious.

FOR A FIRST CAUSE OF ACTION

**(TITLE VII, US Code of Laws Civil Rights Act of 1964 Racial Gender
Discrimination)**

13. The Plaintiff herein realleges all of foregoing allegations of the Complaint as is set forth herein verbatim.

14. The Plaintiff's allegations of racial and gender discrimination that are described herein violate Title VII of the United States Code of Laws and other applicable laws.

15. As a direct and proximate result of the Defendant School District's racial discrimination in its treatment of the Plaintiff; and in its contemporaneous gender discrimination of the Plaintiff, she is entitled to damages, actual and punitive, including lost back and forward pay, loss of earning capacity, emotional distress, damage to reputation, mental anguish, and such damages have resulted from both racial and gender discrimination and she is entitled to costs and attorneys fees.

FOR A SECOND CAUSE OF ACTION

(Hostile Work Environment)

16. The Plaintiff realleges all of foregoing allegations of the Complaint as is set forth herein verbatim.

17. The facts alleged herein, and the unlawful acts derived therefrom establish that the Plaintiff was exposed to a hostile and unlawful work environment for which was is entitled to damages under the authority of Federal and State law, and she is entitled to be compensated actual, punitive damages, and costs, including attorneys' fees.

FOR A THIRD CAUSE OF ACTION

(Violation of Outstanding Court Order)

18. Upon information and belief, an Order issued by this Court in about 1997 which, forbids and prohibits the Defendant herein from engaging in racial or other discrimination affecting its administrative personnel which, Order is now in effect and has been violated by the Defendant in this matter alleged herein, and such violations have adversely affected the Plaintiff for which she is entitled to further relief as described herein and should be imposed by this Honorable Court.

PRAYER FOR RELIEF

The Plaintiff as a citizen of the United States and South Carolina is entitled to all the relief sought herein; and is entitled to the benefit and protection of the outstanding and enforceable Order issued by this Court against the Defendant.

Dated: April 24, 2023

Respectfully submitted,

s/Thomas S. Tisdale

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